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ABSTRACT

As education for leadership becomes increasingly important, the role of the academic library should assume new dimensions, and the library should become a major vehicle for leadership education. An examination of the library-related recommendations in the report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "College--the Undergraduate Experience in America," as an exposition of the academic library's role in citizenship and leadership education reveals that this traditional thinking is too conventional and limiting. Alternative recommendations for academic libraries in harmony with the report but more creative in their approach include: offering general undergraduate research and methods elective courses taught by librarians that would expose students to the total information environment of an unfamiliar discipline; establishing an "Information Amphitheater" designed to demonstrate the vital role of information in the local, national, and global decision-making environment; conducting programs to promote and illuminate the "culture of information"; supplying ample funds for the acquisition of non-print materials as well as books; and participating in library consortia to design projects that the general public might utilize. A bold approach to the practical implementation of such new ideas and concepts will aid in the development of effective leaders. (KM)

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The Academic Library and Education for Leadership

Representative Major R. Owens

"Human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." This quotation from H.G. Wells' Outline of History is well-known, but familiarity does not decrease its compact profundity. It is a basic truth, a warning which, when not heeded, causes massive dislocation and suffering. It is a living prophecy that foreshadows the decline and fall of societies, nations, world religions, and political ideologies. And as human history progresses, education becomes more and more a matter of education for leadership.

In the global village which we now inhabit, numerous nations are losing the education race. They do not have a large enough group of leaders able to manage the complexities of their national situations, and they are not capable of educating enough leaders to meet their needs. But we do not need to go to other nations to see the failure of education to keep pace in this escalating race. In the United States, numerous industries and neighborhoods are suffering their own small catastrophes as they find their workers and leaders inadequately trained, prepared, and educated for the tasks they face.

Throughout human history, the survival of the group has always depended on the fitness of its leaders. As civilization has evolved, the only change in this rule has been in the definition of and the requirements for "fitness." Fitness is no longer defined by the brute strength to wield a club or throw a

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spear, or by the skill to use a sword effectively. Even the strategic and tactical genius employed by the best World War II military commanders is now obsolete. For centuries, diplomatic and negotiating skills have been as important as military combat skills; today, they have been elevated far higher.

The primary mission of any college or university is the training of leaders. Colleges and universities have an obligation to produce leaders, leaders with the skills and qualifications needed to ensure their societies' survival and fitness. The primary skills our leaders need today are those of research, writing, rhetoric, statistical calculation, computer conceptualization, and media manipulation. No set of institutions other than colleges and universities has the ability or the capacity to develop these skills in large numbers of people.

The people who are fortunate enough to receive college training automatically become members of an elite group. All college students anywhere in the world belong to an elite. The overwhelming majority of the people of the world never graduate from high school; mere admission to a college places one in a special class. Even in America, all students who receive higher education belong to a select body, whether they attend an Ivy League school or a recently established public community college.

Education produces leaders; it brings privileges and honors; but along with these privileges and honors come the obligations of leadership. Society has a right to expect that the graduates of higher education institutions will be capable of assuming leadership and will be willing to exercise that leadership for the

good of all members of society. Society has a right to expect that college graduates will be better prepared than non-graduates to lead in their area of expertise, in their neighborhoods, their cities, their states, their nations, and their world. Society has a right to insist that the small minority that has been provided with higher education must strive to understand the complexities of the world, must act as a resource when their leadership is needed.

When the development of leadership is seen as a primary concern of higher education, the role of the academic library assumes new dimensions. In addition to its traditional supportive role, the university library should also be a major vehicle for leadership education. To make its unique contribution to the mission of leadership development, the academic library must strive to establish and maintain the highest common denominator on the campus.

If the library is to fulfill its potential it must be a salon for the setting of universal aesthetic standards and intellectual values, a permanent exhibit of the powers and benefits of information literacy, a general information smorgasbord where specialists may diversify their diets; a window on current local events; a well-placed watched-tower overlooking our global village; and a multi-media kiosk continually highlighting leadership data. No other campus component or department has the resources or the capacity to present these personal development opportunities to the total university community.

A more specific exposition of the role of the academic library in citizenship and leadership education could begin with the four library related recommendations in the recently released report of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, College: The Undergraduate Experience in America.

Recommendation #1: That all undergraduates should be given bibliographic instruction and be encouraged to spend as much time in the library as they spend in class. This call for more bibliographic instruction is an ancient wail. But while the higher education community repeatedly and accurately identifies this priority need, there is a little evidence of any widespread resolve to take a few simple steps to remedy the problem.

College students often receive a negative and ridiculous introduction to the campus library through a unit of their freshman composition class on "bibliographic instruction". One weekend assignment requiring the "treasure hunt" - style pursuit of a set of standard questions via certain standard library tools is the total mandated bibliographic study for most of the nation's entering classes. After that introduction, as noted in the Carnegie Report, for all except a small percentage, the library becomes a trysting place or the quietest place to study when cramming for an examination.

Campus administrations sincerely seeking to close this longstanding shortcoming might begin by integrating the libraries more thoroughly with the general academic program. While physical education is often a required course with at least one unit of credit, very seldom is credit given for a library sponsored

bibliographic instruction course. Perhaps the neanderthal notions which still exist to deny faculty status to librarians is a part of this problem. Or, perhaps, except for a few unusual campuses, librarians have never made a convincing case for their mainstream involvement in the training of leaders. In this fundamental area - bibliographic instruction - most academic libraries lose their first opportunity to become the highest common denominator on the campus.

In addition to bibliographic instruction taught by librarians, colleges should also consider offering as an elective a general research and methods course taught by librarians. Students should not be compelled to wait until graduate school before they are allowed to upgrade their general information literacy. The ability to apply information to whatever tasks are encountered is one definition of information literacy. Or, stated in another manner, it may be deemed the ability to maximize the utilization of the information in problem-solving. One synonym for information literacy might be "information engineering".

Every student gains information literacy or learns information engineering in his/her area of specialization. Colleges go out of business when they are not able to adequately train specialists. The campus library and its librarians may serve as a major resource in completing the education of each student by increasing their competency as generalists. To be capable of assuming responsibilities as a leader, each college graduate must possess competence as a generalist as well as competence as a specialist. There is no automatic or inevitable

contradiction or collision between these two goals. An assumption that this is another way of making the argument for a liberal arts core program on every campus would be a correct assumption. Unfortunately, liberal arts advocates are seldom creative enough to include the campus library or the disciplines of library science in their programs. This blind spot has hurt the much needed liberal arts efforts a great deal.

Consider the fact that the "survey" courses which most liberal arts programs endorse have for a long time been the victim of almost as much misguided undergraduate contempt as the campus library. Only the most creative teachers have been able to inspire respect for a given field through survey courses mandated for students who are specialists in some other field. The pre-law students ridicule the required science survey courses as much as the chemistry majors ridicule the required literature courses. Meanwhile, on very few campuses have there been experiments designed to achieve the broadening of each student's education by requiring courses similar to the "literature" courses offered in library schools.

Why not have specialists approach the study of areas where they are not seeking in-depth specialized knowledge in order to prepare for the next higher stop in the learning chain by studying the "literature" or "materials" or "information" environment for that discipline? The courses that librarians have traditionally called literature of the social sciences, sciences, fine arts, technology, business and commerce, etc. are courses which cover the video-tapes, micro-films, computer programs, films, audio-

tapes and electronic data-bases, as well as print items. Students exposed to an examination of the total information environment of an unfamiliar discipline would probably complete the course with an abiding respect for that field. At the same time a frame-work would be established for the life-time pursuit of any facet of the subject which may have aroused an unusual interest.

Needless to say, students thus exposed would view the campus library with a light that fosters greater comprehension of the total potential of the library to enhance their intellectual growth and development. Exposure to the library science brand of "literature" courses would develop an understanding of how and where to find information relevant to a particular field; how to compare sources; how to check for accuracy, validity and timeliness; and how to search fruitfully within the full universe of available information.

Recommendation #2: That colleges should "sustain the culture of the book" through such activities as author visits and faculty seminars on influential works. An extension of the commentary offered above on Recommendation #1 quickly reveals the gross inadequacy and outdated conceptualization underlying this second recommendation. Attempting to "sustain the culture of the book" is a rather precious and quaint way to approach today's college students. A more creative attempt to develop an appreciation for the "information culture" with a bold assumption that the book; that is, the printed word remains as the foundation for all information and communication would be more timely and more likely to achieve the desired objectives. A wide range of library

activities designed to promote and illuminate the information culture is needed and also doable within the milieu of present-day campus life.

Making the kind of "bibliographic instruction" breakthrough into the mainstream of the academic program advocated in the above response to the first recommendation of the Carnegie Report may prove to be exceedingly difficult. Moving back to the supplementary or enrichment posture which is more traditional for libraries places the campus library and librarians on more practical ground. Exhibits and library programs are routine enterprises. Whether such exhibits and programs are supervised by the library professional with the least seniority (as is too often the case) or by a specialist in public relations, such tasks would prove to be easy ones if done in the usual mode with the usual spirit and attitude.

But in order for the library to fulfill its function in the overall process of educating leaders by becoming the place of the highest common denominator on campus, the usual mode, spirit and attitude must be discarded. Instead of viewing the exhibit and programming component of the library's mission as a window dressing operation, the parsley sprinkled over the main course; instead of assuming a museum-like posture, these activities should be infused with new energy and creativity.

Why not begin on every campus with at least one central and permanent library-based or library-supervised exhibit designed to demonstrate the vital role of information in the local, national and global decision-making environment. Why not a facility

patterned after the "Situation Room" of the U.S. State Department? Such an exhibit must have certain permanent features such as a set of clocks which tell the time in five to ten major cities in the world; globes and maps which cover the entire world; more detailed map renditions of the campus locale, the city and the state; and an information resource map showing library and information facilities throughout the city and the state.

Among the free-standing items there should be a demonstration computer solely for the purpose of illustrating the role of the computer in data gathering and information dissemination. In some highly visible spot there should be a simple, old fashioned, brightly-colored kiosk where any person may post items. In addition to micro-film and micro-card readers containing the most needed campus life and local information (as determined by campus librarians), there should be an accessible set of video-tape players with a supply of video-cassettes for review by individual students on general matters ranging from the campus library processes of acquisition, classification, processing and dissemination of learning materials to a history and structure of the faculty and student governing bodies. Video cassettes evaluating the best available materials on marriage and parenting should be included since the majority of the students will ultimately get married and become parents. Similar material on how to build a personal and family library with an extensive section on children's books and materials is an absolute necessity.

Several electronic screens must be placed on highly visible

walls to provide ongoing updates of rapidly changing information of importance to all of the university community. Included there must be a screen for world, national and local economic data. Students who will become leaders, regardless of their areas of specialization, must learn that the gyrations of the stock market, the changes in the national unemployment rate, budget deficit, and other similar indices are matters which will have an impact on their lives and the lives of those they will lead. Also, the changing prices of gold, oil, cotton and other commodities as well as the balance of payments for international trade, the number of new housing starts, the consumer price index; all are examples of what must be made familiar to future leaders.

Another electronic screen should feature important developments in the scientific, technology and medical world which are likely to impact on the general populace. General educational and cultural developments which are not likely to be covered in other available media should be featured on another screen. Included here would be listings and annotations of significant current books, video cassettes, television documentaries, etc. In addition to providing current information, the contents of such electronic screens, as well as the other items in the "Situation Room" type exhibit, would display to the students a great deal about the ability of librarians to select relevant items from among the vast global sea of information being generated each month, week and day.

In addition to the awareness and information gained from the subject contents, students would learn a great deal about the

essence of librarianship from such an exhibit. Every educated person should learn how to better extract information of value from the total universe of information. Every educated person should develop skills which enable them to take a chaotic batch of information and impose some system which creates order. In these areas librarians are the experts. Librarians dare to select from that complex flood of information materials being generated. And librarians dare to impose order, not by "shushing" people in a room, but by carving a niche for any fragment of information that appears and by facilitating the retrieval of that fragment of information when it is needed.

Of course the "Situation Room" permanent exhibit must contain books and other printed materials. A wide range of significant types and proto-types of materials must be available for hands-on examination. Needless to say there should be a sampling of reference tools for each major discipline. The spirit of the "literature course" approach outlined above must be kept alive. But there should also be a section for children's books and a section for foreign books and periodicals. The complete English language translation of Pravda must be made available. The exhibit which starts with a "Situation Room" motif thus will be enlarged into an "Information Amphitheater".

Programs to promote and illuminate the "culture of information" should be conducted in a spirit which parallels the thrust of the "Information Amphitheater". Entrepreneurs from the information industry should be invited in addition to book authors and editors. Nothing would enhance the "culture of the books"

more than expositions by the producers of outstanding television documentaries. Such lectures would dramatically illustrate the role of the printed word in the monumental tasks of researching and pre-shooting preparation for the film medium. And likewise, computers never get programmed without extensive advance print work. Speakers who reveal and review the volumes of instructional materials that must be prepared to facilitate the operation of computers and other technological wonders would generate greater respect for the book.

In addition to persons knowledgeable about micro segments of the information culture, the campus library programs should seek to expose students to the experts who have key roles in the macro information world. The Librarian of Congress; the Chief Librarian of the CIA; the manager of the New York Times information services; the Army Colonel in charge of U.S. Army information systems; the publisher of World Book Encyclopedia; top agents and editors who have produced several best-selling novels within the last decade; the Chief of Communications for the White House; all of these are persons who conduct information engineering on a high level or a mass level. These and other similar persons possess the capacity to impressively promote and illuminate the "culture of information" as well as "enhance the culture of the book".

Recommendation #3: That support for the purchase of books should be increased, with a minimum of five percent of the college's operating budget going to libraries. And now the neanderthal limitations of the best available conventional thinking are shamefully exposed. Is the five per cent recommended

here for the purchase of books or is this five per cent for the total expenditures for libraries? If the five per cent is for books, then there should be another five per cent for the more expensive non-print materials and services.

Without unduly belaboring the point, there is at least one compelling question to be asked. How does the five per cent figure compare to the expenditure of colleges for athletics? If per capita formulas were used, would the amount spent per school on each athlete be greater or less than the per capita amount expended for library materials? Should the great universities strive to spend at least twice as much per student on library materials as it spends per athlete on the sports program?

One can readily see that while the recommendation that support for the purchase of books should be increased is a welcomed statement, the failure to recognize the need for the more expensive learning materials inhibits any moves to make the library a more active and relevant component of the mission to train leaders. The kind of mind-expanding "Information Amphitheater" approach discussed above requires not only an extensive initial capital outlay for equipment and facilities alterations, it also necessitates a significant additional expenditure for non-print materials.

Most higher education faculty members would argue that the books must come first. But this conventional assumption is no longer a self-evident one. If teaching is the prime concern of the college professor, then it would be negligent to ignore the contributions which non-print materials make to the process of

learning. More than fifty years ago the United States armed forces learned that one visual image is worth a thousand words in the teaching process. As the items to be learned grow more complex, visual images to not become less effective. Indeed the geniuses who may become the pioneers on the abstract scientific and technological frontiers of tomorrow have often decided to pursue the subject only after having their imaginations fired up by some specific film, video or television presentation. Even still photographs from outer space have recruited far more promising young physicists, astronomers and geologists than the printed theories and predictions could ever inspire.

In literature and the social sciences, visual images are equally as potent. Certainly a more thorough preparation of competent generalists can be achieved through non-print media. To understand this assertion, consider the "trigger principle" in communication. At one end of the spectrum non-print media is not at all concerned about clarifying and highlighting what appears in print. Bits of data fed into computers or electronic transmission devices are examples of this kind of raw information. At the other extreme, beginning with charts, graphs and photographs and moving to video and film, non-print is usually seeking to summarize, clarify and highlight information that already exists in print or could be more thoroughly explained when committed to print. These non-print items, in reality, are nothing more than "triggers" in the learning process. The "triggers" on the movie screen, the video or audio cassette, or the television screen set off a search for more information.

When handled properly, a documentary on Haley's Comet can "trigger" a search for hundreds of books and articles. Eyes on the Prize, a documentary about the American Civil Rights Movement currently being aired on public television throughout the nation, is a magnificent work of art which may stand alone without the embellishment of other materials. However, each episode about this recent controversial and dramatic chapter in American history stimulates a desire to go search out the answers to certain questions that are raised. Or, in some cases, a need is generated to close the gap or complete an outline of events or a sketch of a key personality. In most of these instances the search for more information can be satisfied only with print materials. The end of the information-seeking chain reaction "triggered" by television is usually a book.

Which is most important and which must be purchased first, print or non-print materials? The questions is an obsolete one when you are concerned with training students to be competent generalists as well as competent specialists.

Recommendation #4: That colleges should work with local schools and community libraries to help strengthen library holdings. Strengthening information systems for both its students and the general populace should be a concern of the university library. Certainly, the preparation of students for leadership is enhanced through the interaction between the campus and the community. Although he campus is not an ivory tower, it is a place where students and faculty are freed from the pressures of day to day reality in order to pursue more long-term goals. Some

degree of involvement with the community is highly desirable to prevent campus inhabitants from acquiring a distorted view of reality.

Institutional interaction is highly desirable. In too many instances individual students and faculty members have used community groups for their own research purposes and then disappeared, leaving a bitter remembrance. Both the college and the community would benefit from a more formal set of cooperative agreements. The campus library would obviously be compatible with local public libraries, special libraries, school and other university libraries. Already libraries are ahead of many other institutions or campus departments in achieving a high degree of resource sharing with surrounding communities.

But the sharing is usually among professionals and scholars. And the sharing is usually an activity which involves the movement of materials from collections to persons with the capacity to identify their own needs. New York City is second to none in achieving this kind of cooperation. Columbia University has contributed greatly to this effort. But in very few places in the nation is there a joint effort among libraries to promote and illuminate the "culture of information".

The "Information Amphitheater" approach described above looms as a monumental undertaking; however, for a consortium of libraries, the project would be far less awesome. Why not have the college, neighborhood and municipality collaborate on a project which all students and all interested citizens may utilize? Average citizens need to undergo certain mind-expanding

experiences which heighten their awareness of the information environment around them and nurture insights as to how they may use that environment.

In other words, part of the campus library's effort to contribute toward the development of students capable of serving as leaders would also be useful in encouraging citizens to function better or inspiring more self-education utilizing all available media.

To use a hypothetical but not far-fetched example: If a great university like Columbia University decided to construct an "Information Amphitheater" of the kind enumerated above, it would be wise to make the facility available to the general public. Such a gesture might encourage immediate municipal participation in the funding. Of still greater importance is the fact that great corporations like IBM, Xerox and Lockheed would probably be willing to donate the entire facility and thus reap the benefits of the public appreciation which would be engendered. A state of the art, technologically exciting illumination of the role of the "culture of information" in today's world and in the next century would represent a monumental achievement. In addition to serving as a magnificent training laboratory for Columbia students, the exhibit would be one of Emerson's "better mousetraps" enccuraging ordinary citizens to "beat a path" to its door.

Columbia University would be an ideal sponsor for such an undertaking. The School of Library Service would be the most appropriate "lead" department for the development of such a facility. The entire national community of academic librarians

and schools of library science should be called upon to help meet the challenge of designing a facility that would serve the basic purpose and at the same time be exciting. Technological freakishness would not be allowed to take over if librarians remain in control and retain a clear vision of the results being sought.

The "Information Amphitheater" must impact on individuals at several levels. First, it must be capable of creating a kind of positive "information shock" for the student or citizen on tour for the first time. Second, the experience must be a seductive one which brings each initial visitor back for subsequent visits and more detailed exploration of the "Information Amphitheater". And finally, the amphitheater exposure must be a "trigger" experience which stimulates life-long exploration and utilization of libraries, other information facilities and a wide variety of information materials and products.

This unusual or even extreme example of a state of the art "Information Amphitheater" at Columbia with joint government and corporate participation is not a recommendation for a standard or usual procedure. Academic libraries across the country are not expected to emulate such a model. The expectation is that the principle of the core "Situation Room" supplemented with more immediately utilitarian information equipment and library tools to make an "Information Amphitheater" will be implemented on some scale in any college or university library concerned with making a more profound and lasting contribution to the process of better educating students to be leaders.

In summary and conclusion, it should be noted that the proposition is a simple one. Academic libraries can play a major role assisting with education for leadership. To serve as leaders, college graduates must be competent generalists as well as competent specialists. The notion that one can be a competent generalist is not widely understood or accepted. But it is a concept at the very heart of the library profession. There is also a critical need in our society for more competent generalists since competent specialists are able to lead only in their chosen field of specialization. College graduates will be called upon to provide leadership of many kinds at many levels. A thorough immersion in the "culture of information" contributes greatly to the achievement of competence as a generalist.

Emphasis on a "culture of information" is very much in harmony with the liberal arts program advocated by the leadership of most college administrations. The failure to more fully involve the campus library and campus librarians has contributed greatly to the difficulties experienced by core liberal arts programs. Instead of being stimulated by the generalist component of their education, most students develop contempt for those courses required to "round off" their education.

Academic librarians can make a vital contribution by pressing for greater involvement in bibliographic instruction and by promoting the format utilized in graduate library school "literature" courses. The greatest innovation, however, which academic libraries may accomplish could be implemented within the context of current academic library functions. Combining its

obligation to provide a library orientation for all students with its obligation to "sustain the culture of the book" and its obligation to promote and illuminate the "culture of information", the academic library should develop an "Information Amphitheater" as a major vehicle for contributing to the education of leaders.

Such an "Information Amphitheater" could simply be fashioned out of a more imaginative use of space in rotundas and hallways. Or it could be achieved via the conversion of an existing "exhibition" room within the campus library. Or it would be possible to convert or build a facility outside of the library building but operated under the supervision of campus librarians.

The recommendations contained in this discussion are generally in harmony with the recommendations regarding libraries contained in the recently released Carnegie Foundation report on U.S. colleges. In every instance, however, the Carnegie report has been deemed to be too conventional and too limited. The report is another example of major policy-makers failing to rise above that traditional thinking about libraries and librarians.

History is a race between education and catastrophe. One vital purpose of education is to develop leaders who will steer society away from the quicksand pits of catastrophe. There is a danger that for lack of imagination educators will fail to develop a sufficient number of leaders and thus lose the race. Librarians are among the educators who must apply more imagination and librarians must be bold in the practical implementation of new ideas and concepts.